



State of North Carolina
Office of the Governor

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EASLEY ANNOUNCES STATE'S TOP RANKING IN BUSINESS SURVEYS
North Carolina Number One for Business Locations and Expansion

RALEIGH – Gov. Mike Easley announced today that North Carolina ranked first as a site for business locations and expansions, as well as number one in a national analysis of states landing new jobs and investment. *Plants Sites and Parks*, a trade magazine targeted to corporate executives, ranked North Carolina top in the country in both their readers' survey of preferred states for locations and expansions and in their assessment of announced economic development projects from across the U. S.

"During the last four years, we have worked hard to strengthen the state's business recruitment tools while continuing invest in education and infrastructure," Easley said. "These number one rankings are further proof that our strategy of keeping the cost of business low while building a skilled workforce is working; and it is the reason that North Carolina is outpacing the nation in job creation for the year."

The annual surveys done by *Plants Sites and Parks* offer a glimpse into two aspects of the economic development arena – which states are on the radar of corporate leaders and which states are actually landing the investments and jobs. North Carolina came in first in the readers' survey this year and in 2003. In the Bizsites survey, a review of jobs and investment announced during the last year, North Carolina ranked top in the country for the first time since 1997. In 2003, the state ranked fourth.

"North Carolina has been ranked in the top ten of each of *Plants Sites & Parks'* eleven annual Readers' Surveys and has made the top ten in each of the past five Bizsites Surveys, but this year is the first year North Carolina has held the top spot in both of our annual surveys," says managing editor Lisa M. Bouchey. "As a matter of fact, this is the first time any state has held the top spot in both surveys."

Economic development projects included in the Bizsites survey had to meet one of the following criteria: at least 20 new jobs, capital investment of at least \$1 million or 20,000-square-feet of new space.

"North Carolina took the number one spot on both surveys this year, well ahead of the other states," says Margaret Talley-Seijn, associate editor. "In the Bizsites Survey, the state's total score was more than double its nearest competition, the widest margin we've ever seen on the Bizsites Survey. And on the Readers' Survey, North Carolina was listed as the first choice by more than a third of the respondents. The results are truly remarkable."

For 30 years, *Plants, Sites and Parks* has provided economic development information related to site selection and facility planning. Published by Reed Business Information, the magazine has more than 44,000 readers.

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